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# CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

## California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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**RELEASE**  
**DATE:** December 17, 2010

### CAL FIRE URGES SAFETY ON THE ROAD THIS WINTER

**Sacramento** – With a major storm system upon California, the chilling winter months bring rain, fog, ice and other hazardous weather conditions that pave the way for a substantial increase in motor vehicle accidents. This winter season, CAL FIRE is advising all drivers to take extra precaution while behind the wheel.

Last year alone, CAL FIRE responded to over 6,000 vehicle accidents in the months of November, December and January. These accidents are often caused by motorists driving at unsafe speeds for the conditions of the road. Officials warn that it's important to use the surrounding road conditions to gauge safe speeds, rather than relying solely on the posted speed limit.

“The winter season represents a very dangerous time of year to be behind the wheel of a vehicle,” said Battalion Chief Dave Teter, CAL FIRE’s safety officer. “With the increase in road hazards during these cold months, it’s more important than ever to ensure you take the extra precautions necessary to make every drive a safe one.”

“Its imperative that your vehicle is in good working order,” said John Carrier, CAL FIRE’s fleet manager. “A car that’s not maintained can be extremely dangerous on a wet and slippery roadway.”

To help steer clear of vehicle accidents this winter, CAL FIRE recommends the following:

- Use weather conditions as a guide to slow down.
- Avoid sudden stops and quick direction changes, and be sure to leave additional distance between your vehicle and the one ahead.
- If visibility is limited, slow down and keep a constant watch for other vehicles.
- Be mindful of icy roads. Black ice can be nearly invisible and temperatures do not have to be below freezing for ice to form on the road surfaces.
- If the vehicle begins to slide while driving on ice or snow, avoid using the brake. Instead, slowly release the gas pedal and steer the vehicle in the right direction.

For more information on life and fire safety, visit our website at [www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov).

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